

# MECHANICAL MEMORIES MAGAZINE

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ISSUE 61

DEC. 2011



*The only UK magazine dedicated  
to vintage coin-operated amusement machines*

# Mechanical Memories Magazine

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# Editorial

Hello, and here we are at last with Issue 61, December 2011. Having spent some time relaxing and getting over the auction, and having been told to finish the painting and decorating before Christmas (yes, she did stipulate THIS Christmas) plus spending time getting urgent work done down at Brighton, I am not over-confident that you will receive this before the end of the year, let alone Christmas – if not, then I hope you all had a good one!

And on the subject of lateness, sincere apologies to our international subscribers who will have received their November magazines much later than intended. I managed to get the UK magazines out fairly early (by my standards at least), but then concentrated on getting the auction catalogues in the post. As the days past, I'm afraid I sort of forgot about the internationals. So once again, sorry about that.

Many thanks for all the emails I've received following the auction and I'm sorry I haven't been able to reply to them all – there were just so many! Once again it seems we all had a most enjoyable day, and at least the weather was on our side this year. Next year's event is provisionally set for 25<sup>th</sup> November. See centre pages for more.

Well that's just about it for 2011. Assuming you all receive this in time, Sharron and I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very happy and prosperous New Year.

Until 2012

All the best

*Jerry*

**Front Cover picture:** R & W Win an Aero. See Stuart's story on page 8.

# Dreamland

## MARGATE

### Save Dreamland Update December 2011

There is lots happening at Dreamland at the moment. Of most interest, following the report in the previous MMM of the visit by representatives of the Heritage Lottery to Dreamland in November, I am very pleased to announce that the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) confirmed a grant of £3 million towards the Dreamland Margate project. The HLF grant is match funding to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Sea Change grant of £3.7m and Thanet District Council's contribution of £3m. The money will be used by the Dreamland Trust to restore Dreamland Margate and create the world's first amusement park of historic rides with classic side shows, cafés, restaurants, special events, festivals and gardens and a celebration of our British seaside and popular culture with youth culture heritage at its heart.

We are delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded our project such a large grant. This puts in place all the funding we now need to enable us to reopen Dreamland Margate and at the same time secure the future of its three remarkable listed structures, the Scenic Railway roller coaster, Dreamland Cinema and 'Lord' George Sanger's Menagerie cages. These will form the centrepieces of the world's first amusement park of thrilling historic rides. The HLF funding will be released once the Compulsory Purchase Order on the site has been confirmed.

The revival of Dreamland is a major component of Margate's and Thanet's overall regeneration, providing a substantial visitor attraction which will generate at least 350,000 annual visits, with valuable learning, training and employment opportunities for the local community. The park will also have provision for a dedicated learning centre, exhibition space, community room, performance area, screenings, special events, festivals, and a sensory garden and allotment created by volunteers.

The works to the Park and Cinema Building have been divided into 5 initial stages, with the first stages consolidating the rides and attractions to the northern portion of the site. Stage 1 of the first phase of the project involves re-establishing Dreamland as an amusement park, including the restoration of the Grade II\* listed Scenic Railway to full working condition and the construction of a new modernist style Scenic Railway station to replace the original one destroyed by an arson attack in 2008. Other works include the restoration of the Grade II listed menagerie cages, repairs to the Grade II\* listed Dreamland Cinema and creating strong entry points

through the Cinema Building and from the car park, a dedicated learning room, exhibition space, interpretation, landscaping works and the creation of an attractive and inviting park environment. A selection of the restored historic rides collection will be installed in the park along with a mix of replica and hired rides. This approach allows us to preserve and rotate the collection bringing in new attractions each year to keep the offer fresh and exciting to encourage return visitors.

## **Vintage Pinball Parlour event**

All enthusiasts of vintage slot machines should visit The Dreamland Trust's special Vintage Pinball Parlour event this December in Margate. Back by popular demand following last year's successful first event, we are at the Pie Factory, 5 Broad Street, Margate from 16<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> December 2011, open daily, 12-5pm and late night Wednesday 21st December. This year's star attraction is the vintage 1968 Basketball arcade game. Other attractions include classic pinball games from the early 1960s to the 1990s and a rock n roll musical selection from the pristine 1963 Rock-Ola Jukebox. Fun for all the family!

## **Dreamland in lights**

The word is that we will see the first five restored iconic signage letters on the Dreamland Cinema Building fin being test lit on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2011 – time to be confirmed, but no doubt after sun set. A fantastic historic opportunity to capture the illuminated Dream coming true! Keep checking our website News and Events page or follow us on Twitter and Facebook for breaking news on the most symbolic Christmas lights switch on Margate has ever seen.

And finally...to celebrate all this Dreamland activity, Joyland Books has reduced the price of the book Dreamland Remembered from £15.99 to only 11.99. See our advert on the next page.

### ***Nick Laister***

Chairman, The Dreamland Trust

Jan Leandro, Audience Development Officer

[www.dreamlandmargate.com](http://www.dreamlandmargate.com)  
[www.savedreamland.co.uk](http://www.savedreamland.co.uk)

# **Dreamland Remembered: 90th Anniversary Edition**

**by Nick Evans**

Margate's Dreamland park opened in July 1920 and millions flocked to enjoy its attractions in the decades that followed. A visit to the Kent coast resort wasn't complete without a ride on the famed Scenic Railway, the Looping Star, the Big Wheel or the dodgem cars.

Dreamland's trendsetting 1930s cinema led the way in design while the ballroom became famous for dancing and big name music concerts. Its restaurants fed the hordes descending on Margate for their beanfeast outings. Later on, it would hold its own as an exciting theme park.

The resort's decline in recent years has taken its toll, leaving many yearning for a return to simpler times when candy floss and kiss me quick hats were the order of the day.

This edition of Dreamland Remembered, updated and expanded to celebrate the park's 90th anniversary, contains a nostalgic collection of nearly 250 illustrations from its earliest days to the latest ideas to create a heritage theme park.

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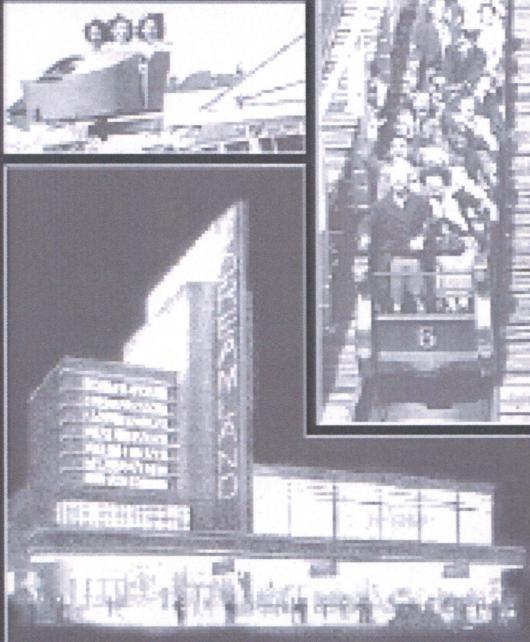
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# Dreamland Remembered

## E A M L A N D



50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Celebrating Margate's famous amusement park  
by NICK EVANS

 joylandbooks.com

# The Day After Coventry

By Stuart Dale.

Well it's the end of November, and the annual vintage coin-op auction in Coventry has once again been and gone. Is it just me, or are the years getting shorter? It seems like no time at all since the last one, and this year I managed to get the machine I wanted, so I came away happy. Also, just like last year, as the regular reader of this magazine will remember, Mrs Dale and myself stopped over in Coventry on the Sunday night. And just like last year, on the Monday we made a detour on our journey home so that we could take a look at another vintage slot machine museum. Our destination this year was Wellingborough.

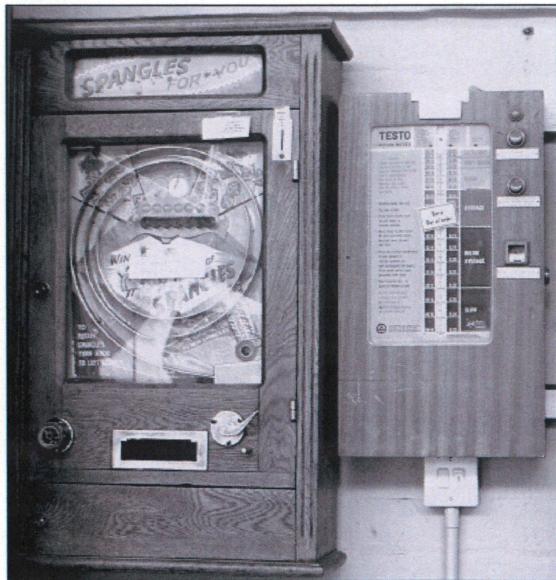
## The Wellingborough Museum

As museums go, The Wellingborough museum is a little different to most, as it is privately owned by the Winifred Wharton Trust, and run entirely by volunteers. It is also used as a base by several local groups, like the Northampton Film Archive Trust and the Northamptonshire Family History Society, to name but two.



The museum building itself has an interesting history all of its own. It was originally built as a Victorian swimming baths in 1892 by the owner of Dulley's brewery, and was intended for the use of the people of Wellingborough. The water in the baths was kept nice and warm by use of the waste heat created in the beer brewing process, as the brewery was only next door. *"I think there is a lesson to be learnt here in this age of diminishing resources"*. Sadly by 1919 the baths had closed and the building had been taken over by George Cox, and was used as a shoe factory right up until 1994, when Cox's moved to a newer building. In 1995 Wellingborough council had made plans to demolish the building and clear the site. A local businessman, Robert Wharton, stepped in with an offer of buying the building, restoring it and using it for the good of the towns people. Sounds kind of familiar? The Winfred Wharton trust was set up to administer the building, and in 2007 after many years of hard work and fund raising, the Wellingborough museum finally opened its doors to the public.

But what has this got to do with vintage slot machines? I hear you ask! Well one of the attractions of the museum is a vintage penny arcade. Luckily they also have a very nice cafe area, where you can sit and get a pot of tea and a bun, so Mrs Dale set up a base camp in the cafe, whilst I went in search of the machines. At the moment the old penny arcade is, like the rest of the museum, a work in progress, and is constantly growing and changing as time goes by. They have about ten machines on show, ready to take your old pennies, and about the same number of machines in storage and ready for use. I am told by Robert that the machines are proving to be very popular with the visitors.



Ruffler & Walker Spangles allwin and Testo Reaction Meter.

With the sale of old pennies, which are available from gift shop, they are starting to produce some of the much needed revenue to help with the running and upkeep of the museum. The children who visit the museum seem to like the allwins best. The arcade has four Ruffler & Walker sweetie allwins on display: Spangles, Aero, KitKat & Rountrees fruit gums. Each machine pays out a packet of sweets or a chocolate bar. They may not be the correct sweets for that machine, as we all know the packet sizes have changed over the years and no longer fit, but the kids don't seem to mind, as long as they get something for their penny. In fact it was some 50 years ago that a sweetie allwin paid me a packet of Polos, and that started my lifelong love of these strange wooden boxes!



*Circle Skill wall machine, currently in storage.*



**Top,** Ruffler & Walker Rountrees Fruit Gum and Kit Kat allwins.  
**Below,** Crompton's Tip em Off.

Of course no vintage arcade would be complete without a Mutoscope. Again, this is an old penny play, and still has its original reel showing a .....well, I will let you see for yourself when you pay the museum a visit – I don't want to spoil the surprise. Another favourite is the Jay Pee Manufacturing Steer-a-Ball machine; very hard to do. I had six goes on this machine and never managed to win!

You will also see a working model called the Haunted House. This is of course the same machine that was featured in the May 2011 issue of this very magazine. I for obvious reasons am thrilled to see it working in a real live vintage arcade. Another quite tempting machine is the Tip-em-Off drop case machine, where it looks as if you can't lose, but I didn't walk away with any pennies left, but then again, that's just how it was meant to be.



*Haunted House (ex Stuart) and Steer-a-Ball.*

Amongst the other machines that will eventually be put on display, or are sometimes wheeled out for special events, include an Easy Perm & a Chad by Oliver Whales; a Sirdar & Co Circle Skill which pays out sweet cigarettes (or candy sticks as they are now known); a Bryans Bullion on new penny play and a Ruffler & Walker Fill-em-Up. All the machines are in good working order, so if you are ever in the area or you live in Wellingborough, do pop in and give them your support – admission is free!

So until the next time, may your balls remain active & your pennies never tarnish!

***Stuart Dale***

The Wellingborough Museum.

12 Castle Way.

Wellingborough.

NN8 1XB

[www.wellingboroughmuseum.co.uk](http://www.wellingboroughmuseum.co.uk)



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Jerry 07710 285360

[Jerry.mmm@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:Jerry.mmm@tiscali.co.uk)

# Coventry 2011

So, another auction over, and once again, we seem to have broken any previous record we may have set for customer satisfaction! The event was very well attended, possibly our busiest ever, and with the largest number of lots we have ever had, it was certainly a day to remember. 'Coventry' is now firmly established as the slotties' social event of the year, and I know many of you are already looking forward to next year's (which is provisionally set at Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> November).

Many of us are now 'making a weekend of it' with a good number staying at hotels on the Saturday night, and some staying over on the Sunday night also. A small crowd of slottie friends were staying at the Premier Inn located in central Coventry and within easy travelling distance to the venue. Unfortunately, Sharron and I were staying at a hotel further out of town, which meant I had to spend a small fortune on cab fares in order to meet up on the Saturday and Sunday evenings. Perhaps next year we can organise a large group booking somewhere, and maybe get some discount. The Premier Inn certainly seems a good choice.



*Sharron on the Saturday evening and, er, three empty bottles of wine.*

So what of the auction? On the whole, prices were a little down on what we've come to expect in recent years; it seems we're all beginning to feel the effects of the general economic climate. That's not going to change for many years, so we just need to get used to it. Most of the machines sold, some quite well, although the biggest casualties seemed to be German wall machines and (surprisingly) one-armed bandits. We had thirty-three bandits on offer this time, coming close to the record we set a couple of years ago with forty plus. On that occasion, most of the machines were sold, many for good prices. However, this year only half of the machines on offer actually managed to sell, which was rather disappointing.

On a much brighter note, I was very pleased that our star lots, the remainder of the Brian Bates collection, all found new homes and in the main achieved good prices. As I said before the event, this was the first opportunity many newer collectors will have had to see rare early machines such as these, and it could be many years before we see similar rarities come to the market.

So, that's it for another year. Many thanks to all those who helped out on the day, particularly our usual crew: Doff (head of accounts); Kevin (chief security officer) and of course our two auctioneers, Kevin and Steve. We'll see you all again in 2012.



*Some of the star lots from the Brian Bates collection.*

**Some of the prices realised in the Coventry 2011 auction. The full list is available to view in the Arena on the pennymachines website.**

17	Oliver Whales Treble Chance allwin, on old penny play.	360
18	Oliver Wales Win a Gift allwin, on old penny play.	290
20	Essex Auto Manufacturing Corn Exchange wall machine.	350
23	Rialto, allwin type wall machine. Superb all round condition.	225
24	Diana shooting machine, 1956, operates on 20p coin. Very rare.	320
26	Steeple Chasers, German horse racing wall machine, 1956.	400
28	Rare Oliver Whales 3 ball Reserve allwin, with keys.	410
29	Shefras Time Limit allwin, on old penny play.	380
30	Easy Push coin pusher, on 2p play.	130
33	Sega Bell Hi-Top one-armed bandit, on 6d play.	270
35	Rare Mayfield Automatics Hi-Top one-armed bandit.	175
49	German peanut vendor.	38
51	Sealed bag (1200) mint 1967 old pennies.	73
58	Oliver Whales Easy Perm allwin, in very good condition.	315
59	Wonders 24 Cup allwin, on old penny play, for restoration.	300
64	Small 1930s allwin, with keys.	425
65	Rare Victory Flag wall machine, 6 ball catcher, coin return.	700
66	Mutoscope viewer, by the International Mutoscope Reel Co.	770
75	Sega Bell Hi-Top one-armed bandit, on 6d play.	180
76	Mills Hi-Top one-armed bandit, on 6d play.	185
78	Rare Egyptian Bell one-armed bandit.	780
95	New Parvalux motor c/w gearbox and speed controller.	105
106	Ruffler & Walker Hat Trick multi-cup, multi payout allwin.	440
107	Rare Wonders giant allwin ‘One Fruit’. In good working order,	710
108	Treble Chance allwin, on old penny play, with keys.	285
109	Samson Grip Test, on old penny play.	150
110	Rare Gunter Wulff Double Six wall bandit.	190
111	Much sought-after Bryans Worl Borl two-player wall machine.	750
112	Ruffler & Walker Fill-em-Up giant multi column allwin.	340
113	BMCo large multi-cup allwin, on old penny play.	280
114	Multi-ball catcher machine by Handan-Ni, c.1915. Token payout.	980
115	‘Electra’ allwin electric shocker, c.1910.	760
116	‘Your Horoscope’ fortune machine by Argyle Auto. Co. c.1912.	450
117	‘Pickwick’ style machine by Henry Klein, c.1900.	860
118	‘Fortuna’ automatic bagatelle by Johef, c.1901. Token payout.	1100
119	‘Improved Pickwick’ by Pessers, Moody, Wraith & Gurr, c.1905	1200

120	'Coronet' by Johef, c.1901. Plus spare case for similar machine.	1000
121	'Bijou' automatic billiard machine, c.1901.	1100
123	Wonders Quick Returns allwin, on old penny play.	540
124	Wonders Win and Place allwin, on old penny play.	375
126	Ruffler & Walker Earth Satellite allwin.	500
134	Bryans Bullion, on old penny play.	410
147	Pussy Shooter gun, re-chromed.	80
154	Novelty Merchantman crane spares.	220
155	Rare early stamp vending machine.	110
157	Space Flight wall machine.	390
159	Oliver Whales Kiss-O-Meter, on old penny play.	250
161	Bingola E/M wall machine, on 1d play, with locks & keys.	120
162	Jamisons See-Saw wall machine, on old penny play.	100
165	Parkers Carousel allwin, on old penny play.	480
166	Hawtins Allwin Deluxe, on old penny play.	360
167	Bryans 12 Win Clock, on old penny play.	475
171	Rare Parkers Wild West allwin, on old penny play.	510
179	Cast Iron 'Electricity is Life' electric shocker.	725
181	Black Cat cast iron cigarette vendor, c.1930.	300
191	Speed controller (pre war).	50
202	Mills Poinsettia one-armed bandit, fully working on 6d play.	420
203	Pace Comet one-armed bandit, on old penny play.	325
207	Aristocrat Arcadian one-armed bandit, on 1p play.	210
208	Jubilee Riviera one-armed bandit, on new 10p play. GWO.	120
213	Original Bryans Retreeva case to restore.	90
220	Terry's Pastilles vending machine.	50
223	Handan-Ni multi-ball catcher wall machine, on old penny play.	850
224	Duomat, in lovely condition, working on old penny play.	250
227	Bradley Challenger, oak cased, working on old penny play.	310
228	'Smiley', American circle skill type machine, on 5c play.	325
229	Crackerjack allwin, working on old penny play.	450
230	Bell Fruit Cascade wall machine, on 1p play.	130
250	Complete Jennings Governor mech. on shilling play.	290
252	Complete Mills mech. on 6d.	160
266	One-armed bandit case.	85
271	Allwin door, with part mech.	190
283	Bally one-armed bandit.	50
286	Mills Hi-Top one-armed bandit, on 10c play.	380
289	BDR one-armed bandit, converted from 3d to new penny play.	180

# Duchess

By Robert Rowland

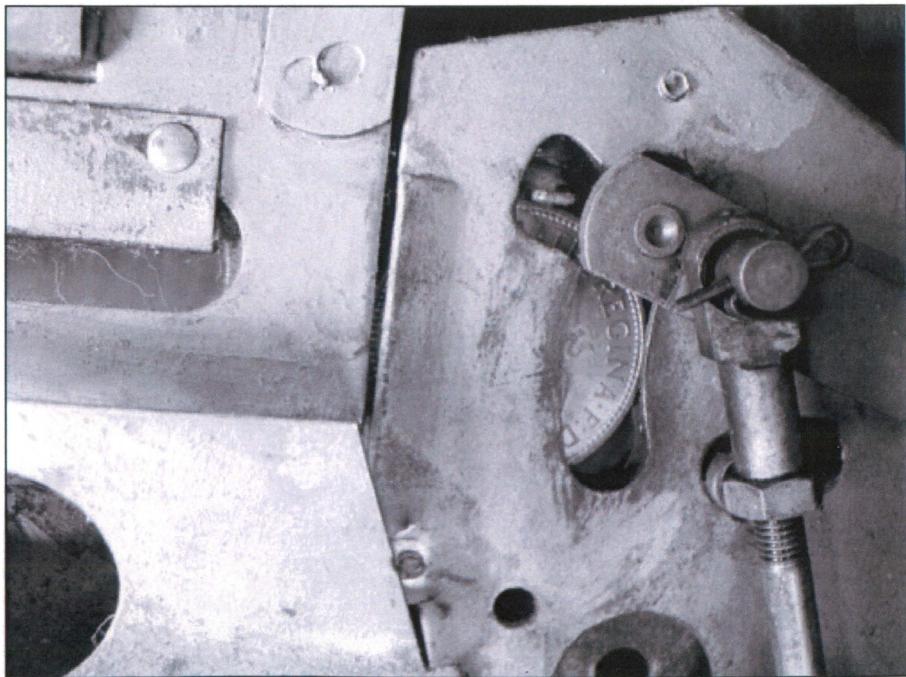
I have written in previous articles in this magazine of my delight the day our family moved to Mablethorpe in January 1965. My first real encounter with the local amusement arcades was in the first week in March of that year. Queens Arcade was one of two arcades that opened at the weekend (the other was the Empire). The bigger arcades didn't open their doors till Good Friday, so each weekend until then, most of my week's spending money would end up being spent in Queens.

One of my favourite machines in there was a one-armed bandit called **Duchess**. I became quite friendly with the owners of Queens Arcade, an elderly gentleman who I knew as Mr Wright and his son Jim. They both probably appreciated the fact that most of my week's spending money ended up in the cash box of their Duchess machine. As the summer season arrived with more arcades open, I grew out of Duchess and it became more fun to try to work out winning systems on many of the various electro-mechanical machines that were about (which I did with quite a bit of success).

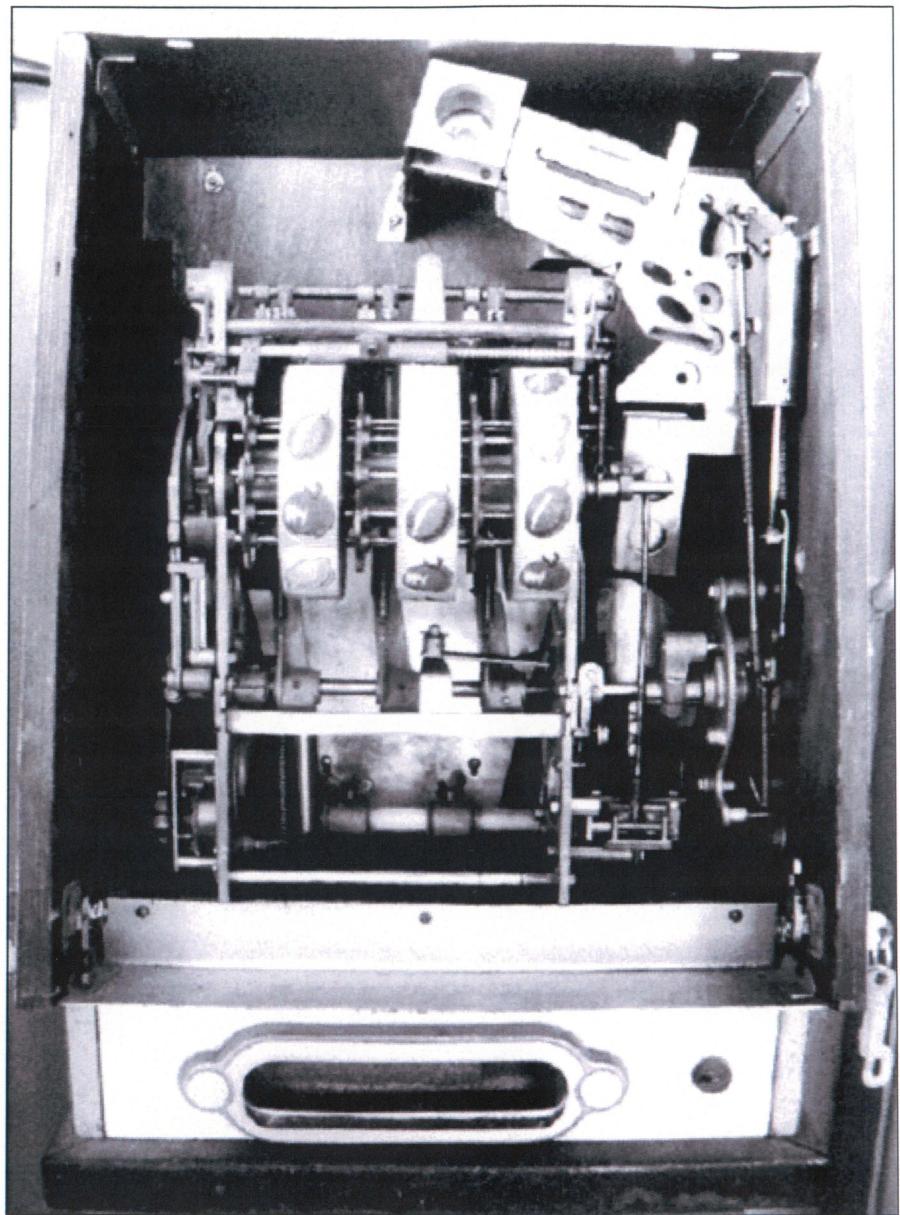


However, I always had a soft spot for the Duchess. During that summer, I played Duchess machines in Jacksons Radio, where they had two side by side. It was in there that I somehow found a cheat that was to be very profitable in the summer seasons that lay ahead. One day whilst playing Duchess, I was so eager to pull the handle down and spin the three reels, I must have pulled too early and the penny inside became jammed. This jammed coin in the machine would result in a clicking noise, also you would not hear the penny dropping down inside the machine. You would keep the handle held down until the machine had finished its cycle, then you would slowly raise the handle upwards until you heard another click. Then the machine would play again by pulling the handle down, without inserting another coin.

Of course, you would pretend to enter a penny in the round hole at the top of the machine. This was aimed at the attendant sat behind the cash desk on the other side of the arcade. In theory, you could play all day in this cheat position, however, in those days the attendants would become suspicious if us kids were on the same machine for a period of time. It usually lasted around five minutes of free plays and payouts before you felt uneasy, and it was time to release the handle all the way to the top and play off that final go, hearing the penny dropping inside the machine. – time to take a walk and return at a later time to repeat the trick.



*A penny jammed in the coin chute of Robert's Duchess.*



*Duchess, like many other British conversions, uses a German Beromat type mech. I wonder whether Robert's cheat works on these mechs in their original wall format?*

I only ever told my best friend David about this, and we worked this cheat together, keeping the secret to ourselves. The instant he spotted an attendant or any other local kids heading our way, he gave the signal and I would release the handle, and no one was ever any the wiser. To this day, I swear that no other local kids knew this trick.

We didn't empty these machines, simply because that would have drawn the attention of the operator to the conclusion that something untoward must be going on, resulting in the attendants keeping a special eye on both Duchess machines, and that was the last thing we wanted. Also, Duchess payout tubes held around fifty coins, so didn't empty that easily.

I would like to know in any readers ever knew of this particular trick way back then? Please let Jerry know if you did. To demonstrate my little cheat, I have filmed a short video clip of the whole procedure, which can be seen on Youtube. Search for *Penny arcade memories one arm bandit* and this clip will show you all how it was done back in the 1960s.

Moving on, a few summers later, with decimalisation looming, I got the thrill of my life when one day in Queens arcade old Mr Wright came up to me and informed me that various slot machines would be up for sale at the end of the summer season, and Duchess was one of them. Wow! I reserved that machine there and then. That summer season, despite the temptation, we never attempted to do the cheat on that Duchess in Queens arcade, because had we got caught, I am sure Mr Wright would not have sold it to me, and no way was I going to risk not getting that machine. At the end of the season, as promised, the Duchess in Queens was sold to me for £5. For me, this deal was the biggest thrill imaginable at the time. No kids had their own machine (unless it was a toy) – it just didn't happen. I never dreamed that I would one day own that Duchess that I first saw and loved back in 1965. I am pleased to report that I still have that machine today, and I would be very reluctant to ever let her go, because even today, this machine still means so much to me.

### ***Robert Rowland***

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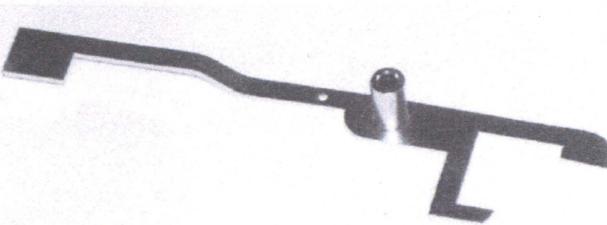
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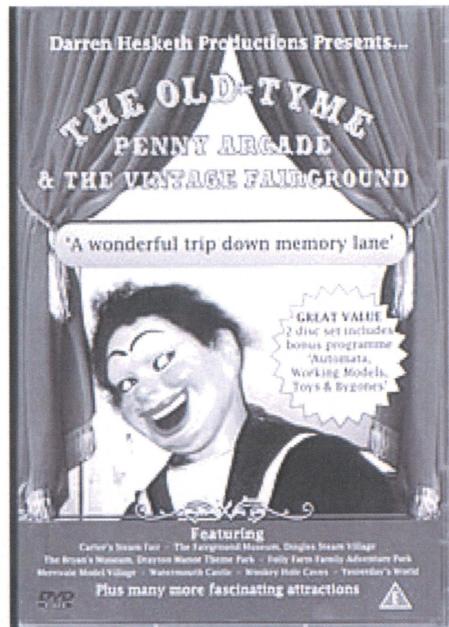
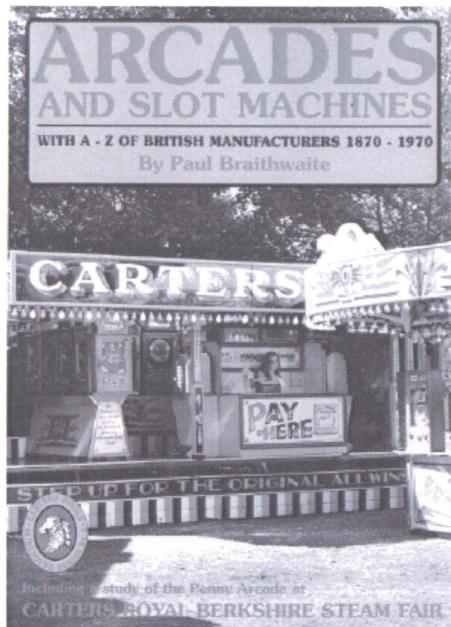
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